

LOUIS AND THE SPANISH
THRONE.

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I know not whether Napoleon recollected the motive assigned by Louis for at first refusing the crown of Holland, namely, the climate of the country, or whether he calculated upon greater submission in another of his brothers ; but this is certain, that Joseph was not called from the throne of Naples to the throne of Spain until after the refusal of Louis. I have in my possession a copy of a letter written to him by Napoleon on the subject. It is without date of time or place, but its contents prove it to have been written in March or April, 1808. It is as follows :
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BROTHER— The King of Spain, Charles IV., has just abdicated. The Spanish people loudly appeal to me. Certain of obtaining no solid peace with England unless I cause a great movement on the Continent, I have determined to place a French King on the throne of Spain. The climate of Holland does not agree with you ; besides, Holland cannot rise from her ruins. In the whirlwind of events, whether we have peace or not, there is no possibility of her maintaining herself. In this state of things I have thought of the throne of Spain for you. Give me your opinions categorically on this measure. If I were to name you King of Spain would you accept the offer ? May I count on you ? Answer me these two questions. Say, "I have received your letter of such a day, I answer *Yes*,¹ and then I shall count on your doing what I wish ; or say " *No* " if you decline my proposal. Let no one enter into your confidence, and mention to no one the object of this letter. The thing must be done before we confess having thought about it.¹

(Signed)

NAPOLÉON

Before finally seizing Holland Napoleon formed the project of separating Brabant and Zealand from it in exchange for other provinces, the possession of which was doubtful, but Louis successfully resisted this first act of usurpation. Bonaparte was too intent on the great business in Spain to risk any commotion in, the north, where the declaration of Bussia against Sweden already sufficiently occupied him. He therefore did not insist upon, and even affected indifference to, the proposed augmentation of the territory of the Empire. This at least may be collected from another letter, dated St. Cloud,

¹ Garden (tome xi. p. 200) alleges that the throne of Spain was first offered by Napoleon to Louis on 27th March, 1808. Du Casse (toine iv. p. 285) allows that this may be true, as the first hint given to Joseph of his being called to Spain is dated 18th April, 1808; see *Jfu Casse*, tome iv. p. 227. Thiers (tome viii. p. 622) assumes that Joseph was the only choice.